



Episode 501 — The Future of Martial Arts | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey there everybody welcome! This is whistlekick martial arts radio episode 501. Today, I'm giving you my top five predictions on the future of martial arts. My name is Jimmy Lesniak, I'm your host here for the show the founder of whistlekick and everything we do at whistlekick is in support of the traditional martial arts. If you're interested in what we're doing to that end visit whistlekick.com that's where you'll find everything we're doing it's a place to find our store and if you use the code PODCAST15 you can save 15% off anything that you find over there. Now this show it gets its own website: whistlekickmartialartsradio.com, we put up two new episodes every week and the goal of the show is to connect educate and entertain traditional martial artists throughout the world. If you want to show your appreciation for what we do you can do quite a few things, you can make a purchase like a referenced earlier, you could share this, may be a different episode, follow us on social media we are @whistlekick everywhere, you could tell a friend about what we're doing, maybe pick up a book on Amazon, check out one of our programs which were adding to all the time. Leave a review somewhere or support the Patreon. Patreon.com/whistlekick that's the place to go for that. You can support us monthly with as little as 2 dollars but if you spend 5 dollars more you're going to get access to even more content, stuff that we make exclusively for our Patreon supporters.

When I sat down to do this episode it had a few iterations. Originally, I was considering how we might talk about martial arts Post COVID-19, post coronavirus, whatever you choose to call it. But I realized that that was just one influence on some things that I see coming and so today I'm



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going to share with you some of the things that I see on the horizon for the traditional martial arts. Now, I'm not putting any timeframe on any of these but I would say that if we look 10 to 20 years out this is what's coming. I am not Nostradamus, I'm not going to predict that these will absolutely come true, but these are my hunches and I guess we can use the word prediction but I really have no I guess dog in this fight, if you will, I hope that some of these come true, I hope some of them do not, in fact. But I'm interested to hear how people respond. We certainly can ignore that COVID-19 has had an impact on the world and on martial art schools I've seen schools close. I've seen schools actually thrive as a result of these changes and the reason I've resisted talking about this for so long, is that it gets political and let's face it, our newsfeeds and everything else that were seeing right now is full of information and politics around the subject and how want to be associated with any of that. But when we look at one impact of this virus, specifically, we have talked about and that is online training. I have no hard and fast numbers to go on but I would estimate the majority at least two thirds of martial arts schools are teaching classes online while, I don't know, anybody who is publicly teaching in person. I know that there are some things going on behind the scenes that people are having private lessons, there are people defying orders and I'm not speaking out one side or the other because this is not going to be political. I'm not seeing what should be or should not be, I am merely responding to what is. But what is fascinating to me is the number of schools that have long criticized online training, doing online training. And the number of martial artists saying that you can't learn anything online and yet there participating in these classes. I'm a member of a number of martial arts groups on social media specifically Facebook, one of which we host it's the martial arts fund and friends' group. And over the past few weeks I've posted a number of things in there really to get people's thoughts on what's going on and when it comes to online training, one of the common threats that I see through people's commentary is that it's not as good but it's better and then they thought it would be. And then tacked onto that it's not great for learning new material, but it can be really good for reinforcing and training old material. And this is what people have been saying about training on your own and learning from videos as long as I've seen those conversations. So yeah while it's not ideal, it's better than nothing and I think that that's an important thing to consider because it's not going away. There are martial arts schools that are able to host classes for people all over the world on maybe certain subjects or maybe if you want to learn something specific from a certain person, cool now you have an opportunity. Some of the prominent martial artist we've had on the show have been teaching some things online and selling out, filling up there the resume of rooms. You having 100 people participating in these online classes and that's awesome, and I hope that that continues because anything that brings some revenue to martial artists I think is is a wonderful thing.

But what happens in a few months or a year when we don't have a political or health reason however you choose to look at it for teaching online? What happens on the other side of this? Well, I think most things are going to go back to normal but I think some martial arts school owners are going to see the opportunity to teach the things that they know really, really well. Now that could be one on one training with people from all over the world, it could be one-on-one training with people who maybe they're traveling maybe it's reinforcing the classes that they



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have or maybe I think for some, it becomes online only. It doesn't take complex math to figure out that building reputation and then teaching 20 hours of private lessons to people all over the world who follow you turns into a pretty darn good income. And I think some people are going to see that opportunity and develop their following. Much like if you follow the fitness industry on social media, there are a lot of people doing that. There are people who get really popular showing off their physique on social media, they build a group around that and some people in that group pay them for nutrition coaching or exercise coaching, and some of those people makes a pretty darn good money. Why shouldn't why couldn't that happen for martial arts? Not only do I think it can, I think it will.

My next prediction I see a further split between the traditional martial arts and what some people will call the reality-based or practical or whatever martial arts were right smack in the middle of this. You have people who are advocating simply for combat systems and others advocating for the entirety of martial arts curriculum forms and meditation and all of that stuff that we consider to be older. Well, I suspect you know where I fall in my opinion on what I want but we also know that hey I'm a big fan of people having the opportunity to train however they want. So, if this split furthers, I think it just gives more opportunity for people, it's not what I want personally, it's not what I hope for but it's okay.

Third up, here's what I'm really hoping for rank and title matter less. And why is going to happen? Because we continue to dilute the value. The more stripes people put on their belt at younger and younger ages the less people will respect that. How special is it to meet 10th degree black belt now versus 20 or 30 years ago. If you been around a while, you know that when you were coming up it was very rare. I've met quite a few of them. I met eighth, ninth, 10th three black belts in their 40s. I'm not saying there's something wrong with that but I'm saying that that create some inherent pressure on adding more stripes because the very same system that led to people having that many stripes on the belt at that age is going to create a desire for people to separate themselves even further and we have seen some martial arts systems go beyond 10 stripes. We're seeing 11 and 12 and I've even heard some things about systems with 15 stripes. If you meet someone in the future and they say that they have 21st degree black belt, what's your initial reaction going to be? You're going to discount everything that they've told you or might tell you because it sounds ridiculous based on your understanding at least, it would to me. And so, for that reason, I think we will go back to a much simpler ranking system where black belts might be held the 10 but I'm guessing even fewer. We might have student black belts and maybe black belts with instructor level and then maybe even maybe master instructor or Grandmaster, maybe move down to three or four and with that titles will have to be less ridiculous because how much would it make sense to say; oh, this is senior Ultra Uber great grand master with a black belt, right? It doesn't seem to to line up right? Those titles seem to come with the stripes they come from the same place, the same psychology so as we shed one, I think will shed the other and couldn't come too soon.



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On that same sort of idea number four I think styles going to matter less for some people but I think also the matter more for others. I think there will always be people who crave being part of a lineage and knowing how something was done historically. I think if you look at the HEMA, the historical European martial arts community, it's a great example. There are people who really enjoy unpacking those texts and understanding how things used to be done hundreds of years ago and that process that understanding is not only important but it's relevant to their practice and in part, it's that exploration that they take value from. I think we'll see the same sort of thing in traditional martial arts but I think we'll also see plenty of other styles where that's not as important because if you look at martial arts today you're seeing more and more blended styles, these mixtures of martial arts. Not necessarily MMA, but people say no we teach Kyokushin karate and we also teach Muay Thai and we teach Brazilian jujitsu. Well, over time were seeing more and more schools that are kinda blurring the lines and teaching those different aspects to those different martial arts under one umbrella, one program. And some of them give the names, some of them don't and I know that it matters if there named in any particular fashion but I think people will ultimately collect martial arts and teach what works for them to their students because let's face it, that's how martial arts styles started.

And my final production and this is the one I hope happens the most, the values, the principles, the benefits of martial arts will be more widely, if not accepted, acknowledged. Where in this interesting time right now where people are quite often negative and cynical. A lot of people don't have a strong sense of community beyond the walls of their home and the virtual walls of their social media I think at some point social media is going to hit a wall of its own and people will realize now I like being around other people. I like learning things and I like developing myself. How is that going to happen for everyone? No. But I think it will be more than we have today and frankly maybe in some small part that will be because whistlekick works for it because that is our goal. I want to see more people training and I think it's going to happen. I believe it will happen and I'm going to work to make sure that it happens. Because the more people training mortal talk about the benefits of their training and create a snowball effect and hopefully that's the way we can have a positive impact on the world as martial artists and I as Jeremy can look at and say you know, I had a small part in that and I that would made me really happy. We haven't had a movie like karate kid in a while, maybe it'll come from something like that. Somebody will put out some content that will take the world by storm and people say; oh, you know commercial art stuff is pretty great, maybe I should check that out.

And so there you are my five predictions with the heavy dose of hope on some of them for what's coming to the traditional martial arts in the future. Remember you can check out all of our episodes whistlekickmartialartsradio.com and I hope you will leave some commentary whether that's part of the martial arts radio behind-the-scenes Facebook group on on the show notes page for Episode 501, this episode. Because I think is a lot of discussion that could come of this and I would love to see what other people think. If you're willing to support us and what we're doing, you've got some options. Use the code `PODCAST15` to save 15% off at whistlekick.com you can also share an episode, leave a review, tell a friend, or contribute to the Patreon,



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patreon.com/whistlekick and I hope if you see somebody out there in the world wearing a shirt or a hat something with whistlekick on it, you say hello. Let's build some community and help push some of these predictions into reality. Remember our social media accounts @whistlekick and I love hearing from all of you my email address; jeremy@whistlekick.com. Until next time, train hard, smile, and have a great day!